

**PROF.
SCHLEGEL'S
CRITICISM OF
JAPANESE-
ENGLISH...**

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Prof. Schlegel's criticism of

Japanese-English Dictionary according to the annotations of the late Dr. J. J. Hoffmann, extraordinary professor at the university of Leyden, etc., by order of the Dutch Government completed and prepared for publication by Dr. L. SERRURIER, Director of the State's Ethnographical Museum at Leyden. Vol. III, Leyden, E. J. Brill, 1892, T'oung-Pao 1892 n°. 5, Bulletin critique p. 521.

The french proverb: la critique est aisée is one of those proverbs which on closer inspection prove to be thoroughly false. No, criticism is not easy. Speech is an imperfect vehicle of thought and much intellectual labor is lying at the bottom of the visible speech in scientific publications, such as the roots of plants are hidden in the earth. As the botanist not only knows the external form of the plant but its structure and its roots, so there is but the scholar who is thoroughly acquainted with the subject, who is apt to make a criticism as it should be: mild for knowing the difficulties of scientific work, suggestive for being familiar with the laws that rule over the subject. Prof. Schlegel's criticism of the third volume of the *japanese-english Dictionary* judged in the light of these principles falls utterly short.

Unacquainted with the fact, that the Japanese have derived their pronunciation of chinese characters from three ancient chinese dialects, those of *Hân*, *U* and *T'áng*, he ascribes it to a mere phantasy that the same chinese words are transcribed both with the termination *au* and *ou*. In fact, even in modern Chinese, the same words are pronounced *ang* in one dialect, and *ong* or *ung* in another. For instance the word 東 is pronounced *tung* in Mandarin Chinese, and *tang* in the spoken dialect of Amoy: it would be useless to cite more examples, every sinologist knows them. It is an undeniable fact, that in chinese-japanese dictionaries those three transcriptions, or at least the first two occur at the side of the majority of chinese characters, and that the use of each transcription depends on custom, that powerful element in the science of language. So, 高菴勞搔格 are pronounced both *kau* and *kou*, *hau* and *hou*, *rau* and *rou*, *san* and *sou*, *tau* and *tou*.

I have compared prof. Schlegel's criticism not only with my own annotations, but with two excellent aboriginal dictionaries, the *Irova zi-ten* of *Takahasi* (1888) and the *Gen-kai* (1891) which I unfortunately have received only after the publication of the volume III.

Takahasi explains the compound word 馬代 as *uma-rei*, *muma no siro*,

which means the price of a horse. In fact, 代 meaning not only a dynasty, but also a "substitute", the combination, to express "money given in stead of a horse" is not at all absurd.

Prof. Schlegel does not know, that the japanese equivalent for 場 is *ba*, else he would not have made his objection, that 馬場 ought to be written *ba-dziyau* (eng. *jō*); *ba-ba* being the sinico-japanese word, given by *Takahasi* and other lexicographers. So, too 臺場 is pronounced *Dai-ba*; heterogenous combinations of chinese and japanese words occurring frequently.

芭連 *Ba-ren* is explained by *Takahasi* as 馬印ノ類ニシテ火消人等ノ持歩ク者. It is not necessary to stigmatize 連 as an erroneous character for 螻 because 芭連 is to be explained as stripes of palmleaf attached to (a staff). To change 連 for 螻 would be to change the idiom of the japanese language.

賣女 *Bai-dziyo* (eng. *jō*) is translated by *Takahasi* with *asobi-me*, *oyama*, *dziyo-rau* (eng. *jō-rō*), and it would have been a gross error in Japanese to change 賣 into 万 as prof. Schlegel proposes, because this character in Japanese is not pronounced *bai* but *katsū*, *gatsū*, *gatsi* (eng. *gachi*).

梅干 is a japanese expression for "dried plums", explained by *Takahasi* as *umebosi* 乾梅. It is an archaic chinese expression, preserved in Japan. *K'ang-hi* says in voce 干: 又古與乾通. The same word 干 occurs in several japanese compound words, such as 干瓢 *kan-peū* (eng. *pyō*), 干薑 *kan-kiyau* (eng. *kyō*), etc.

Prof. Schlegel does not distinguish between 漠然 and 驀然, both pronounced in Japan as *Bakū-zen*. The first of those two compound words is translated into Japanese by *Takahasi* with *bonyari*, *ai-mai*, which means "indistinctly, vague, ambiguous"; the second with *ma-ssigura*, *tadatsi ni* (eng. *tadachi ni*) which means, "immediately, impetuously".

番 *Ban* is explained in the *Gen-kai* dictionary by 代々勤メニ當ル which means "to be on duty by turns". It proves that the Japanese have extended or perhaps better restricted the meaning of 番 "a time, a turn, a repetition" attributed to the character by the Chinese, into "a turn in fulfilling official duty". 班 *han* on the contrary is not separately used, but combined with other characters in different significations, for instance 班馬 *hanare-uma*, 班列 *tsura*, *kumi*, *narabi*, *kurai*, etc. *Ban-go* 番小, the horrible transcription as prof. Schlegel calls it, is met with in the word 番小屋 *Ban-go-ya*, in fact as a vulgar form, but not the less as *Ban-ya* 守舍 (*Takahasi*).

Takahasi explains 番臺 as *mihari-dai*, "a stand or pedestal for a person who is watching what is passing (or entering)", "as in a bath-house" (*Taka-*

hasi). My explanation of 番臺 may be a little too restricted, I deny that it should be wrong. On the contrary, the two chinese characters 盤臺 proposed by prof. Schlegel to express the idea of "a raised seat for the cashier of a bathhouse" are explained by Takahasi as "a shallow tub for fish" (*asaki sakana oke*).

Prof. Schlegel does not distinguish between 便僻 *Ben-pek* and 偏僻 *Hen-heki*, as the Japanese do. Takahasi explains the first with *Omoneru hito*, *hetsuravu mono*, "an adulator" and the second with *katadzumu*, *higamu*, "to incline on one side, to be partial".

墨池 *Boku-tsi* (eng. *chi*) is rather not a well defined word. Neither *Gen-kai* nor Takahasi mention it. I have found it somewhere explained by *sumi-ire*, *sumi-tsubo*, *yatai* 墨斗, which means "a portable inkstand such as is carried suspended at the belt", or "a small box for blackening the carpenter's marking-line". Afterwards I have found it explained with *suzuri* (*sumi + suri*) "the inkstone", or *sumi-ike* (litt. inkpool); never by *suzuri no ike*, "the cavity for water in an inkstone". To express the idea of the ink-tub of a pocket-writing-apparatus by the characters 墨砵 as prof. Schlegel proposes, would be a queer thing in a Japanese dictionary; 砵 being unknown in Japan, and an unauthorized character of modern invention even in China (instead of 鉢).

基 is of course a typographical error for 臺. Kind critics first look for a mistake, before they mark a fault.

Finally prof. Schlegel reproaches me that my woodcut illustrating the word *Ban-hakū* does not represent a Chinese, but a European vessel. Now I appeal to everybody who has ever seen a model of a Chinese ship, to state if this assertion be founded. Moreover the Japanese text accompanying the original figure describes it with the following words: *Nan-kin no fune nari* (this is a Chinese vessel). Prof. Schlegel's quotation of my translation of the word 蕃 is not exact. It is not *exclusively* used to design Europeans, but my own expression is: "Barbarians, *especially* Europeans"; so the Chinese, being barbarians in the Japanese acceptance are not excluded, which is proved by my woodcut and the accompanying Chinese running-hand characters. The fact, that prof. Schlegel has found the word 蠻舶 attributed to a real European vessel only serves to confirm my interpretation of the article *Ban-pakū* 蠻舶 on the following page of the dictionary as a "barbarian, i. e. European vessel".

Why the same word is *hakū* in one combination and *bakū* or *pakū* in another, I do not know, nobody can tell it. Every Japanese student knows, that the *nigori* is not always employed where it should be expected and vice versa. Much depends on custom; much is to be ascribed to the want of uniformity between the authors. I have thought it prudent to give the words as I have found them.

As little is my object to give an idea of japanese art by the unpretending but instructive woodcuts, which serve to illustrate some articles, as it is my aim to give genuine modern chinese expressions as synonyms to japanese words. In fact, why should I explain the japanese words once in English and once more in modern Chinese? Why in Chinese and why not in any other language? The only reason of introducing chinese characters into the dictionary is that I want to mention at the side of each japanese word the chinese character, which the Japanese themselves use to employ as synonyms. Any other system is false, and would make the dictionary an absurdity. Those synonyms are partly chinese archaisms, as is the case with the word 干, partly they are chinese words, the signification of which has been altered in the course of time; partly but not frequently they are chinese characters in a reduced or vulgar form, by omission of the radical; which is well-known to occur in chinese writings too. But whether right or wrong I consider it to be my duty, to give the chinese characters just as they are sanctioned by the unwritten and illogical law of custom, which plays such an important part in the history of every language. They are no longer to be considered as chinese, but as japanese words, as naturalized foreigners, since they are embodied in that language both in visible and oral speech.

So the many serious faults which prof. Schlegel pretends to have signalled are reduced to the proportion of one printing error. But I do not pretend that my work is faultless; far from it; and I agree with prof. Schlegel as he says in the introduction to his own dutch-chinese dictionary: "Whosoever has once compiled a dictionary will easily understand that the work is not perfect". But it requires a serious knowledge of the japanese language to detect those deficiencies. So much I decline a criticism of sinico-japanese words, considered in the light of mere sinology, so much will I be grateful for receiving hints and observations from those who really have studied the japanese language.

As for the title I have chosen for this volume III, it will be scarcely necessary to state, that I take all the responsibility of that volume, and I dare say of the work in general on me; I and I alone am guilty when faults are found in it. Every volume receives a title of its own, according to the larger or the smaller part which Hoffmann's annotations play in it. After the completion of the work, a general title will be chosen, expressing my profound veneration for the memory of the eminent scholar, who has led the first steps in the scientific paths both of prof. Schlegel and of me.

For the sake of that memory I am deeply sorry that prof. Schlegel has published so inconsiderate a criticism of a work to which the name of our lamented teacher is so closely connected.

SERRURIER.

Leyden, 10 Februari 1893.



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